VELOCITY11
An Agilent Technologies Company

Technical Note

Velocity11 VPrep® Liquid Handling Platform: 96 Channel 30 µL Tip Accuracy and Precision

Introduction

Automated liquid handling devices are used in many processes performed in laboratories today. Liquid handling automation increases sample processing and throughput[1] and improves accuracy (desired dispensed volume is equal to the actual dispensed volume) and precision (a narrow distribution of dispensed volume) when compared to a person operating a handheld liquid pipettor. Automated liquid handling devices can also significantly reduce the occurrence of errors in a process[2]. To further the effort to automate routine laboratory processes, Velocity11® has developed the VPrep™ liquid handling platform.

VPrep Features

The VPrep has eight deck positions which accommodate any 96-, 384-, or 1536-well SBS standard microplates. Deck positions can be configured with weigh pad shelves to maintain liquid levels in a reservoir, while additional positions are available for wash stations, microplates and tip boxes.

The VPrep can be used with 8-, 16-, 96-, or 384-channel fixed tip or disposable tip heads. Heads can be interchanged in a matter of seconds. The VPrep compactness makes it an ideal component of a robotic laboratory automation system, yet also capable of standalone mode usage. Its speed makes it an ideal candidate for plate replication or plate reformatting uses.

Accuracy and Precision Testing

This technical note describes a method to measure the accuracy and precision of the VPrep in conjunction with a 96 Channel ST Disposable Tip Head. The 30 µL disposable tips were tested at the lower end of the practical volume range (0.5-5 µL). Performance at volumes >5 µL meets or exceeds the 5 µL performance. Measurements are determined by dispensing a tartrazine/DMSO solution into dry microplates, filling the plates with water, and measuring tartrazine absorbance. The product's performance meets or exceeds CVs of 5% and accuracy of ±10% of the desired volume across the practical volume range.

The VPrep has eight deck positions and can be configured with interchangeable 8-, 16-, 96-, or 384- fixed and disposable tip heads.

Materials

- Velocity11 VPrep with a 96 Channel ST Disposable Tip Head
- Velocity11 384ST 30 µL tips (product no. 11484.102)
- Velocity11 96-well manual fill reservoir (product no. 08105.001)
- 384-well polystyrene, flat bottom plates (Greiner 781101)
- Tartrazine solution, 0.25% (w/v) dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide [DMSO]
- UV/Vis Spectrophotometer with a 405 nm filter (Thermo® Multiskan Ascent)

Summary

VPrep, 96ST head, 30 µL tips

- 0.5 µL: 2.5% CV ±0.9% accuracy
- 1.0 µL: 2.2% CV ±0.2% accuracy
- 5.0 µL: 1.0% CV ±0.3% accuracy
- >5 µL: equal or better than 5 µL CV and accuracy

Method

60 mL of tartrazine solution is poured into a manual fill reservoir. The reservoir is placed on shelf 2 of the VPrep. A 30 µL tip box is placed on shelf 7. A 384-well polystyrene plate is placed on shelf 6. VWorks3 liquid classes for 0.5-1 µL and 2-5 µL dispenses are utilized. A VWorks3 protocol is created and run in the following manner:

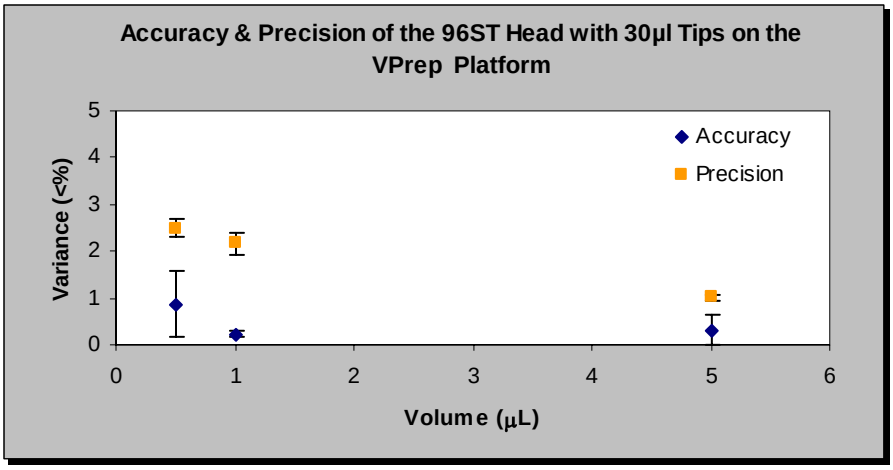
1. Tips are pressed onto the head.
2. 0.5, 1.0 or 5.0 µL tartrazine solution is aspirated from the manual fill reservoir. Aspirate parameters are 6 mm from the bottom of the plate, and preceded by a 0.5 µL pre-aspirate volume (2 µl for 5 µl dispense).
3. 0.5, 1.0 or 5.0 µL tartrazine solution is dispensed into one quadrant of a 384-well plate. Dispense parameters are 0 mm from the bottom of the plate, and followed by dispensing a 0.5 µL blowout volume (2 µl for 5 µl dispense).
4. The transfer is repeated for the other quadrants of the plate.

Dispensed volumes are diluted to 50 µL by the addition of water (in this case, with clean tips and a separate VWorks3 protocol). Plates are centrifuged at 1800 rpm for 60 seconds to ensure full mixing and consistent well menisci. Absorbance is read at 405 nm.

Accuracy is calculated based on an equation derived from a tartrazine/DMSO calibration curve consisting of data points at 0.3, 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 µL, compared to the actual absorbance value in each well. Absorbance values in each well is used to determine the precision of the dispense. Coefficient of Variance (CV) calculations were made by dividing the standard deviation by the mean. The accuracy and precision results are typical, based on averages of three successive dispenses. Accuracy outliers are an average per plate. Results may vary, depending on individual experimental methods and liquid class optimization.

Results

Volume	0.5 µL	1 µL	5 µL
Precision (% CV)	2.5	2.2	1.0
% Accuracy (±)	0.9	0.2	0.3
Outliers (±5%)	22	6	0
Outliers (±10%)	1	0	0
Transfer time (seconds/ plate)	36	36	47



Conclusion

In summary, the liquid handling capabilities of the VPrep liquid handling platform in conjunction with a 96 Channel ST Disposable Tip Head provides precise, accurate and consistent liquid transfers. The 96 channel head, combined with Velocity11's 30 µL disposable tips, can pipette across a low volume range (0.5-30 µL), making it ideal for applications requiring precise dispensing at low volumes. The compact footprint, speed, precision, and accuracy of the VPrep liquid handling platform make it ideal for many applications in the laboratory including compound sample transfers, genomic applications, and microplate stamping and replication applications.

References:

1. Sofia MJ. Leveraging Compound Management Capabilities in Support of Drug Discovery: From Sample Archive to Sample Distribution — Driving Efficiency and Improving Productivity. Laboratory Robotics Interest Group Meeting Oral Presentation, Jan. 2005.
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